For Immediate Release
Nov. 19, 2016

Contact: Greg Langley
Phone: (225) 219-3964

LDEQ, EPA, St. John the Baptist Parish and Denka Performance Elastometers announce schedule for implementation of chloroprene control measures

Denka Performance Elastomers (DPE) announced today it will institute a series of technical measures aimed at reducing emissions of chloroprene from its LaPlace, La., facility.

"We will install a series of interim measures designed to reduce emissions of chloroprene by 85 percent," said Jorge Lavasita, plant manager. "We are working with the EPA and LDEQ to reduce emissions of this compound."

Actions outlined in the company release include:

- DPE will install a modification at the Neoprene Unit to route emissions from the Poly Kettles Vent Condenser to an additional, spare vent condenser which will operate in series with the existing equipment. This project is scheduled for completion and startup in early February 2017. DPE has already received permission from LDEQ to begin construction.

- DPE will install a new vacuum pump and brine condenser on the Chloroprene Refining Column, replacing an older vacuum system. This project is scheduled for completion and startup in second quarter 2017. DPE has already received permission from LDEQ to begin construction.

- DPE will install more than 1,200 feet of pipe to route process vents in the monomer area to the HCl unit for removal by combustion. This project is expected to be online in late third quarter, 2017.

- DPE will install a Regenerative Thermal Oxidizer (RTO) to remove much of the remaining chloroprene emissions from the site in a fuel-efficient manner. DPE's parent company Denka Co. Ltd. has reliably operated similar devices in Japan for many years. This major project is expected to come online by the end of 2017.

In 2010, chloroprene, a substance used in the manufacture of neoprene, was reclassified a likely carcinogen by the EPA, and in 2013, the National Air Toxics Assessment map generated by EPA showed a high risk for cancer in and around the Denka facility. Regulators from both EPA and LDEQ have worked with the company since that time to find ways to reduce emissions from the plant.

Ron Curry, EPA Region 6 Administrator, LDEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown and St. John Parish President Natalie Robottom praised the company for its willingness and aggressive approach to improving its emissions profile.

"EPA remains committed to our promise to the community and local leaders to bring the best science and transparency as we work to protect the people we serve,' said Curry. 'We will continue to conduct air monitoring throughout 2017 and share data with the Louisiana officials, local leaders, Denka and most importantly - the community."

"This is a good start," Brown said. "We're working with EPA, St. John Parish and Denka Performance Elastomers to ensure we protect human health and the environment. The changes Denka has committed to make are estimated to reduce chloroprene emissions by 85 percent. These changes are being done voluntarily and in consultation with EPA and LDEQ and should all be in place within the next 14 months. Air monitoring will continue at the facility during and after the installation of these measures."

"We continue to work with senior representatives from DEQ, EPA and Denka to facilitate changes that will protect the health and safety of our residents," Robottom said. "We are pleased with the progress Denka is making and have been assured that their long range plan satisfies the goals and timeline established by DEQ and EPA."

Follow DEQ on social media: